

**CHAPTER NO. 725**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2329**

**By Dixon**

**Substituted for: House Bill No. 1816**

**By Kernell, Miller, Brooks**

AN ACT To amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 41, relative to creating the "Family Visitation and Crime Reduction Act".

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 41, Chapter 21, Part 2, is amended by adding the following as a new, appropriately designated section:

Section 41-21-243 (a) This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Family Visitation and Crime Reduction Act".

(b) The General Assembly finds that maintaining an inmate's family and community relationships is an important correctional resource that can improve an inmate's behavior in the correctional facility, and upon an inmate's release from a correctional facility, assist in reducing recidivism.

(c) The department shall maintain a visitation program. Policies may include a system for prior approval of visitors and restrictions on visitation deemed appropriate by the commissioner. Each state institution shall have an area designated for visitation. The Commissioner of Correction shall have the authority to suspend visitation in the event of emergency circumstances as defined in Department of Correction policies.

(d) The Department of Correction shall provide at designated visitation areas for approved visitors in each state correctional facility information relating to applicable visiting regulations, dress codes and visiting procedures. Visitors not complying with applicable visiting regulations, dress codes and visiting procedures may be denied the privilege to visit in accordance with department policy.

(e) Correctional officers assigned to visitation areas shall receive training on effective communication with family members and children of inmates, for the purpose of improving the quality of family visitation.

(f) The Department of Correction is encouraged to provide an area for child visitors.


(g) The Department of Correction shall report at least annually to the Select Oversight Committee on Corrections concerning the department's progress on implementing procedures and services that enhance, improve and encourage visitation.

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 41-21-206, is amended by deleting such section in its entirety.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.

**PASSED: May 1, 2002**

  
JOHN S. WILDER  
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE

  
JIMMY NAIFEH, SPEAKER  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**APPROVED this 8<sup>th</sup> day of May 2002**

  
DON SUNDQUIST, GOVERNOR